

Unapproved
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 19, 2010

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on Tuesday, January 19, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield.

Present: Councilors Drake, Hurley, Kotkin, Manousos, McAlister, Montinieri, Roberts, Deputy Mayor Console, and Chairperson Hemmann.

Also present: Jeff Bridges, Town Manager and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Councilor Manousos led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Martin Malicki 79 Southwell Road, said that he was encouraged by the enhanced recycling program. Residents can eliminate waste by using larger recycling bins and smaller trash bins. The Town of Manchester has a very complete recycling program on its website and he hopes Wethersfield can model its website information after Manchester.

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, thanked the Mayor for voting for a new person to head up the MDC. Unfortunately, Mr. DiBella did get re-elected. The Mayor showed good judgment in her vote. He said that another member of Wethersfield voted for Mr. DiBella and the Town should remember his vote when it comes time for this member's reappointment. He said that the budget process is going to be more difficult because of the economy. The Town needs to bring wages, benefits, and pensions down. Personnel costs represent 80 percent of the budget. This is going to be a mammoth year for cutbacks, as is next year. He is glad to have this Council, the other Council would not have seen any budget cuts.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Manousos said that the Budget and Finance Committee met to discuss the Town Attorney RFP. The Committee is still reviewing the proposals and will come to Council with a recommendation shortly. The Committee met with Department Heads to discuss visions of the budget process so that Town staff can work together with the Town Council to achieve savings and efficiencies.

Councilor McAlister said that he attended a Public Works Committee meeting. The Committee discussed recycling, pay per use, and transfer station usage. There is a motion tonight for recycling.

Councilor Drake said that the Capital Improvement Advisory Committee met and started deliberations on creating its list of projects. He suggested that the Mayor attend a meeting to give input on projects. He also attended the Citizens Energy Committee meeting. He said that it

is a very active group working on a comprehensive energy plan for the Town. The Committee would like to have a meeting with the Town Council and Board of Education so that the groups can endorse the energy policy. The Committee's website has more information.

Councilor McAlister said that the Committee is offering a service for \$25 to have a consultant give a four hour analysis of residents' home. It is a \$600 value. The funding comes from the part of the energy fund that residents pay into through CL&P.

Councilor Console said that residents also have the option to select different electric vendors to provide energy. This will create a savings on residents' bills.

Councilor Kotkin said that the Town Council approved the Affinity Program and asked where the Town was in the process.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that the Town Attorney and attorney for Direct Energy have been negotiating some technical points like liability and advertising. It is close to being done.

Councilor Montinieri said that he attended the Shops of Wethersfield program last week. It was sponsored by the Economic Development Improvement Committee. About 50 businesses attended. It was a brain storming session to see how businesses can collaborate to increase their amount of success. There will be follow up sessions.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilor Hurley said that while no Town funds were used, he would like an update on the Cottone Field project.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that pedestal towers to house the lights are being built now. The project is still short \$60,000 - \$80,000. The Town has applied for a grant for \$100,000.

Deputy Mayor Console said that the Town Council is listening to the public. There are portable lights in the parking lot until the permanent lights are installed. He said that he and Councilor Montinieri were on the Rick Garrey cable show on Friday night to keep people up-to-date on what is going on in Town. He said that he hopes people will find it in their hearts to help Haiti.

Councilor McAlister said that he was thinking of ways to measure the work of the Town Council. He said that it will take time but it is important to have the data to map trends and see how the Council works. He suggested that when the Town Council makes decisions one or two matrixes can be set up in the Department on an on-going basis and post the results on the website. An example is providing data on how many stops were made and how many resulted in arrests from the money spent on the holiday DUI checks. It will show whether or not the Town should have

spent that money on that program. He said that he is not looking for a lot of bureaucracy but a simple matrix to track progress.

Councilor Roberts said that these statistics are available the Police Department monthly report. They have to be provided to the State when State grant money is used for a program.

Chairperson Hemmann said that the Town Council attended a Planning and Zoning Commission meeting to discuss enforcement issues and working with the Town Planner to identify areas of concern. She said that it was a valuable discussion. She highlighted the following upcoming events:

- Green Summit Challenge will begin March 1, 2010. There will be an education forum on February 11th.
- The Annual "State of the Town" will be held on Thursday, January 21st.
- The Christmas tree pickup by a cub scout pack is continuing.
- Highcrest Elementary School is hosting a welcome tea for its Sister City in China on January 20th.
- Annual Wear Red Day is February 5th for the American Heart Association.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that:

- The contract with SeniorNet will be expiring but services will be continuing.
- He is still trying to get sample RFP's for a privatizing plan for the Library and will get it to the appropriate committees.
- Meetings with Morrison Avenue neighbors will begin in February. He asked if staff or the Infrastructure Committee members should attend the meetings.

Chairperson Hemmann said that she would like the Infrastructure Committee involved in the meetings.

COUNCIL ACTION

Deputy Mayor Console moved **"TO APPOINT S. BRADLEY MILVAE AS TOWN TREASURER AND HARRY L. LICHTENBAUM AS ASSISTANT TOWN TREASURER FOR A TERM BEGINNING JANUARY 18, 2010"** seconded by Councilor Hurley.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor Hurley moved **“TO ACCEPT THE ARBITRATION AWARD IN THE MATTER OF WETHERSFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THE WETHERSFIELD FEDERATION OF TEACHERS”** seconded by Deputy Mayor Console.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that this went to an arbitration panel for single issue of wages over the three year period of the contract. There will be no wage increase or step increase in year one, a wage increase of 2 percent and step increase in year two, and a 1.5 percent increase and step increase in year three. All other language was agreed upon prior to arbitration. The award is consistent with other arbitration processes recently concluded.

Councilor Kotkin said that this motion will incorporate the item arbitrated and the entire 3 year Board of Education contract. It is a fair contract. He thanked the Town Manager for getting across the financial concerns of the Town to the Board of Education. He said that benefits are escalating at a more dramatic rate than salary. This award incorporates an increase in the teachers' portion of the health insurance. This will be beneficial to the Town when it negotiates with the Town unions. Employees that are eligible for retiree health benefits will be costly to the Town down the road. He hopes that it will continue to be removed from future contracts.

Councilor Roberts said that she was the Town Council liaison for some of these deliberations and feels that it is a good contract with no wage or step increase in the first year. Board of Education administrators, Board of Education members, and the Town Manager all did a great job with this contract.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

BIDS

Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO AWARD A CONTRACT TO DENNIS K. BURKE, INC. FOR THE PURCHASE OF 78,000 GALLONS OF UNLEADED GASOLINE, AS NEEDED, AT A RATE OF \$2.2633 PER GALLON”** seconded by Councilor Roberts.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that this is a CRCOG bid and the lowest responsible bidder.

Councilor Kotkin said that the price is higher than last year. He asked when the new price goes into effect.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that it is date specific; January 1, 2010 is when the new price started.

Councilor Manousos said that the bid switches the gasoline from plus to regular unleaded.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that the bid would have been \$.09 higher to stay with the unleaded plus gasoline.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor McAlister moved **“TO AMEND THE CONTRACT WITH PAINE’S INC., EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2010 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2015, TO INCLUDE EVERY OTHER WEEK, AUTOMATED SINGLE STREAM RECYCLING AT A COST OF \$3.19 PER HOUSEHOLD PER MONTH IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ATTACHED PROPOSAL AND TO INCREASE THE ANNUAL FEE FOR A SECOND TRASH BARREL TO \$200”** seconded by Deputy mayor Console.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that the Council received an extensive memo on this issue. This bid will extend Paine’s contract with the Town and in turn will provide single stream recycling barrels and every other week recycling service for a modest price increase. The hope is that the increase in cost will be offset by a reduction in the tipping fees for trash.

Chairperson Hemmann said that as of July 1st recycling pickup will occur every other week with 26 pickups annually.

Councilor Hurley said that the price for a second trash barrel will go up from \$65 a year to \$200 a year. There are 900 homes that have an additional barrel. Other Towns have also increased this fee and residents have returned the second barrel in some cases. They are starting to recycle more of their trash.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that this will help with recycling and save the Town in tipping fees.

Councilors McAlister said that the Assistant to the Town Manager did a great job with this bid and working with the Committee. Wethersfield has one of the lowest fees around.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that Mike Paine is at the meeting if Council has any questions. He thanked him for his work with the Town.

Councilor Roberts asked if there was a provision if a resident wanted a second recycling barrel.

Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, said that something could be worked out to address that issue.

Councilor Montinieri said that he supports this bid. It is a great move for the Town. Mike Paine is a hard working, trustworthy owner of a trash company. He thanked him for his decision to purchase the recycling barrels for the Town. It is a huge savings for the Town. He said that the success of the program will be deeply tied to education. As the tonnage of trash goes down, the Town may renegotiate with CRRA. The Assistant to the Town Manager prepares monthly reports on tonnage. He asked if the report could differentiate between residential and commercial properties.

Councilor Drake asked what would happen to the existing recycling bins.

Mike Paine said that his company could collect them or residents could keep them and use them for other things.

Councilor Kotkin said that the types of plastics to recycle will increase. It is a way to help to keep taxes down. The difference between the Town paying \$69 a ton and nothing is significant. He would like to move forward with an education program.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, APPOINTMENTS FOR INTRODUCTION

RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE ACCEPTANCE OF PROGRESS DRIVE FROM THE NORTH STREET LINE OF WELLS ROAD (SR 175) TO AND INCLUDING THE CUL-DE-SAC AS A PUBLIC ROAD AND WAY IN THE TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD.

BE IT RESOLVED, that Progress Drive from the north street line of Wells Road (SR 175) to and including the cu-de-sac, approximately 1465 feet in length, together with all easements as shown on the subdivision map entitled: "Wethersfield Industrial Park, Property of Mangifico Development Corp., Wells Road, Scale 1"=100', dated 12-5-88, last revised 11-12-89 by Close Jensen & Miller, Wethersfield, Connecticut," be accepted as a public road and way in the Town of Wethersfield.

MINUTES

Councilor Roberts moved **"TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 22, 2009"** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Roberts moved **"TO APPROVE THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 4, 2010"** seconded by Councilor Kotkin.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Montinieri moved **“TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 5, 2010”** seconded by Councilor McAlister.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. Councilor Kotkin and Roberts and Deputy Mayor Console abstained. The motion passed 6-0-3.

PUBLIC

Robert Young, 20 Coppermill Road, said that it is a good idea to track the DUI funds. He wished the Town tracked the \$50,000 spent on Horse and Buggy Rides. Food pantries could have used that money. How many people actually took rides?

Chairperson Hemmann said that the Town did track those numbers.

Robert Young said that he is glad that there will be a hard freeze on teacher wages next year but a 2 percent increase in the second year will result in a budget increase of \$900,000. He asked where this money would come from. He was disappointed that there was no discussion on how to pay for this increase. He doesn't think this is a good contract.

Gus Colantonio, 16 Morrison Avenue, said it is a good idea to eliminate the fees at the transfer station. Residents should compost leaves and put food down the garbage disposal. A 6.5 percent increase in the Board of Education pay over three years is disturbing. He pays much more in taxes and receives less in services.

Harry Lichtenbaum, 16 Towne House Lane, said that he is honored and pleased to be appointed Assistant Treasurer. Fran Patti the former Town Treasurer recently passed away. She did a good job and will be missed.

George Ruhe, 956 Cloverdale Circle, said that it is great to be able to speak at the end of the Council meeting. He senses a higher level of cooperation between Council members. He continues to encourage that attitude. He said that he likes Councilor McAlister's idea on using a matrix to track progress. He encouraged the Police Department to be more aware of distractions that put people at risk while driving. Meeting with the Planning and Zoning Committee was a good idea. There are areas of Town that are a dump, there is room for improvements. He suggested the time and efforts used to produce monthly reports should be used working with businesses to clean up properties.

Councilor Montinieri said that he wanted to follow up on a comment made by the public. The entire Town Council voted unanimously to approve the arbitration contract. This was a vote on an arbitrated decision after extensive negotiations with the Board of Education. An agreement

could not be reached and the contract had to go to arbitration. A lot of time and research was spent on this item. If the Town Council did not vote to approve the arbitration award every aspect of the contract would be opened up to negotiations, including health benefits and co-pays. Historically, when the Town turns down an arbitrated decision, the final outcome is not good for the Town.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:05 p.m., Deputy Mayor Console **“TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS REAL ESTATE NEGOTIATIONS”** seconded by Councilor Hurley. All Councilors present voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0. Jeff Bridges, Town Manager, and John W. Bradley, Esq., Town Attorney, were present. No motions were made and no votes were taken during executive session.

At 9:12 p.m., Deputy Mayor Console moved **“TO LEAVE EXECUTIVE SESSION”** seconded by Councilor Montinieri. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:12 p.m., Councilor Roberts moved **"TO ADJOURN THE MEETING"** seconded by Councilor Montinieri. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk